Huddersfield Local History Society

Huddersfield Local History Society
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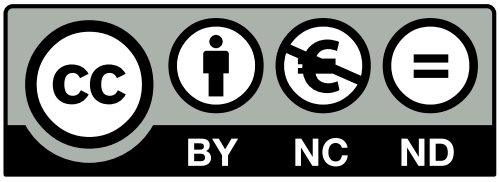

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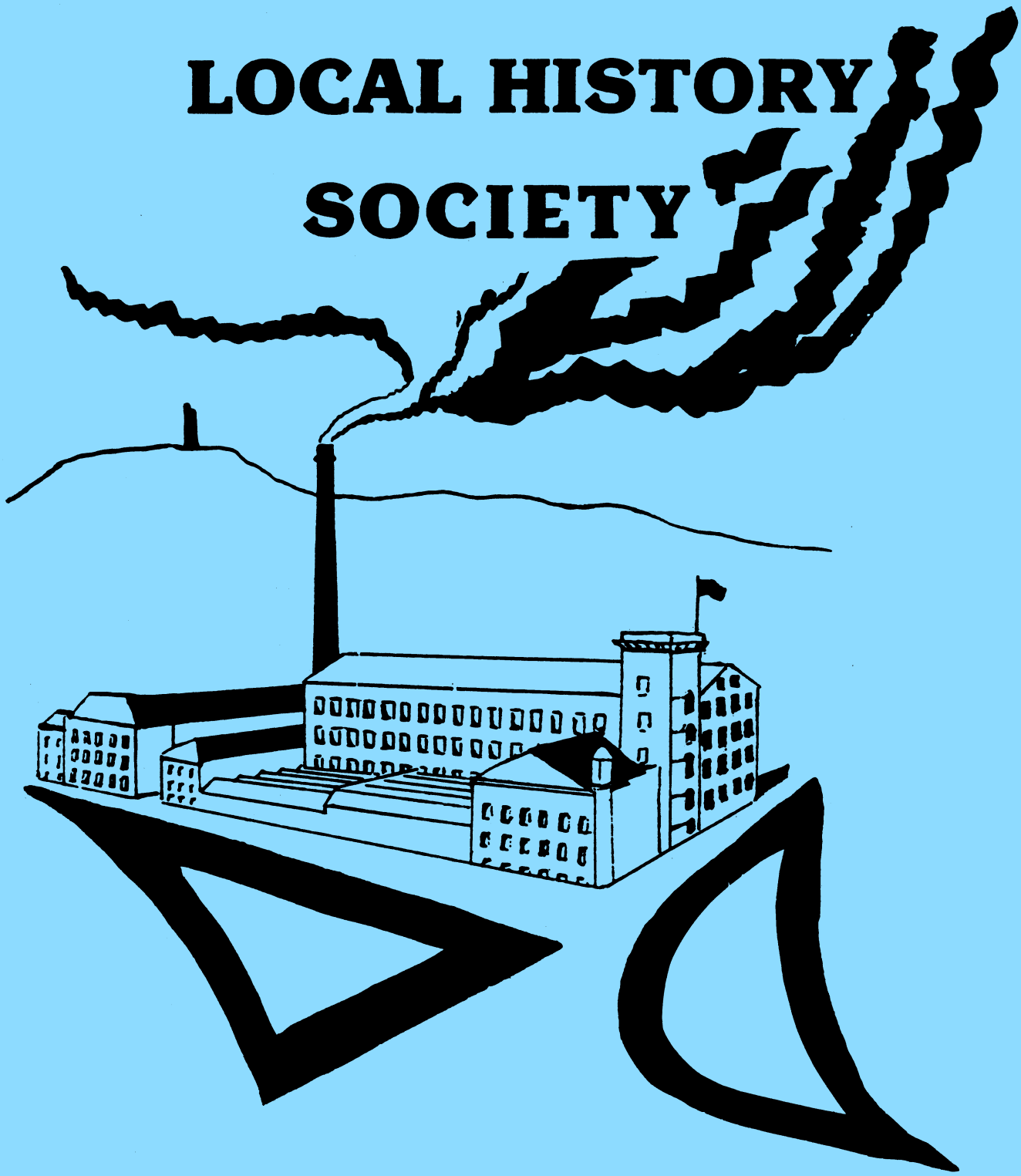

JOURNAL

No. 14 SPRING 2003

DR J B EAGLES

1925-2002

This special issue of the *Journal* is dedicated to the life and work of our much respected member and former Chairman, who died in November. Although it is several years since he occupied that pivotal role in the Society, even the newest members will have been aware of his presence at meetings, perhaps giving an eloquent vote of thanks or even, as recently as October, delivering one of his entertaining 'double act' talks with his wife, Betty. Those with longer memories may recall his numerous writings for the *Journal* and his book on J B Pritchett.

It is a selection of these works that forms the core of this issue, but we begin with two personal tributes to the man himself, the first, by former Secretary Hilary Haigh, is on behalf of the Society

An appreciation

Huddersfield Local History Society has lost one of its most loyal and enthusiastic members with the passing of Dr Eagles.

I had known Dr Eagles for as long as I can remember. Dr Carruthers, Betty's father, was my grandparents' GP, and, as members of his practice, both Dr Betty and Bryan would call at the house to visit them. In those far off days in the 1950s, Bryan and Betty lived on Long Lane, Honley. as our family did. From their house at the top of the 'big hill' we cyclists (later drivers) could just about free wheel home!!

Another personal connection was through Holmfirth Rotary Club. of which my father was a long-standing member, as of course, was Bryan later.

After Huddersfield Local History Workshop was formed in 1978. Bryan and Betty were early members, often coming with their good friends Clifford and Elizabeth Stephenson. Bryan gave his first talk to the society in 1982; the subject was John Benson Pritchett, *First Medical Officer of Health for Huddersfield.* The Committee were so impressed with its content that they persuaded Bryan to allow its publication, the Society's first such venture. It duly appeared as a pamphlet in 1984. Still in print, his booklet has been used as an authorities source for research by many local historians, as have his later contributions, on other subjects, to the Society's *Newsletter* and *Journal.*

Elected to the Committee in 1985, (the Committee knew a good man when they saw one!), Bryan succeeded Tom Wainwright as Chairman in 1980 and he served in that capacity until October 1996.

At the members' meetings, Bryan was always an enthusiastic participant, efficiently hosting the evening and making everyone feel welcome, and who can forget the quizzes which Bryan and Betty produced for Woodsome evenings!

During the ten years of Bryan's chairmanship, I was Secretary of the Society it was a pleasure to work together. Our Committee meetings at Bryan and Betty's were usually lighthearted. and the food was lovely!

After resigning as Chairman in 1996, Bryan and Betty continued to be loyal and enthusiastic Society members, and one of Bryan's last pieces of historical research and writing was for the Study Day at Newsome in October 2002.

It is hard to imagine future meetings without Bryan's avuncular presence. He loved people and was concerned about them. (When my husband was ill and after he died, Bryan was a great support). His funeral service was an uplifting testament to a life well lived in the service of others.

Many, like me, have lost a personal friend with Bryan's passing. Huddersfield Local History Society has lost a true friend who is sadly missed and we extend to Betty and the family our support and sympathy.

Among the many tributes paid to Dr Eagles in a packed Holmfirth Methodist Church, the address delivered by his friend, Mr Brian Evans, struck a particular chord with many of those present. Reflecting on a life well-lived, its uplifting theme of celebration over sorrow seemed to capture the mood of the Service as a whole and we are very grateful for permission to reproduce its' text here in full.

BRYAN EAGLES -
A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

We are here today to celebrate the life, and to delight in our memories, of as good a man as anyone of us has ever met, or is likely to meet; and we are also here to express as best we can our own sense of loss, and our wish to support Betty, and Charlotte and William and their families. in their loss of someone they loved so very much.

Bryan Eagles was born in Melton Mowbray, and went on in due course to Melton Mowbray Grammer School. He was clearly. a bright boy. It will come as no surprise to any of us, however, that he was not seen as the key to England's success in the World Cup. nor in the Ashes series in Australia.

It seems. however, that Bryan was rather good at billiards and at table tennis, in which sport he represented the school. One of the school's fixtures was against the Grantham Girls' Grammar School. I am unable to tell you how Bryan fared, as it were, at the table, but during the evening he got into conversation with rather an attractive blonde girl who was playing for Grantham. The two young people found that they had much in common. Both came from strong Methodist families, both had fathers who were local councillors. who both belonged to - but no, they did not belong to the same political party. The young woman's name was Margaret Roberts later to achieve was it fame or notoriety as Margaret Thatcher. Fifty years later, I dare say, Bryan would have welcomed the opportunity at a return, match, and not of table tennis.

At school, Bryan specialised in Classics, a study that no doubt helps to explain why. in adult life he was always so formidably well-informed on about any matter that you cared to raise with him. Early on in our acquaintance, at a Rotary lunch. Bryan and I became involved in a discussion about (I think) the Fourth French Republic, about which Bryan had obviously read a lot. "But, of course' he said deferring to my background as a History graduate, "you'll know

much more about this than I do". I was flabbergasted. Could he be serious. But I rapidly came to realise that snide remarks were just not part of Bryan's repertoire. He had a humility that respected other people.

From school, however, it was Medicine that Bryan went on to study, at Manchester University. There he became actively involved in debating and in student politics, and he became Vice President of the Men's Students' Union, The President of the Women's Student Union at the time was another young medical student named Betty Carruthers. In 1950, Bryan and Betty married and lived happily together for 52 years, a happiness that they shared with their children, Charlotte and William, and later with their families. and with many friends. Pat and I have known Bryan and Betty for less than half of that time, but we have found them as close, loving, and mutually supportive a couple as we have ever met and we have drawn strength and inspiration from their friendship.

Bryan's academic credentials would certainly have qualified him for one of the more obviously profitable and prestigious areas of medicine. But he chose to become a GP, he wanted to minister to people on a regular basis, He joined the Holmfirth practice what Betty's father was a partner, and himself became the senior partner in due course. He served first as Secretary and then as President of the Huddersfield Medical Society. Injustice always angered Bryan and be was a passionate advocate of the National Health Service, with its original offer of free treatment for all. He committed himself to his work with a dedication that was rooted in his strong Christian faith, and in his conviction that his was the work that God had called him to do. Betty remembers him as a doctor who always went the extra mile that his Lord required of him insisting, for example. on visits that he could have been forgiven for thinking unnecessary.

Bryan loved people, and they loved him. It was impossible to go walking in the Holme Valley with Bryan and Betty without being constantly accosted by appreciative patients and former patients, all anxious to have a friendly word with the Doctor; and I should add, that even, in the remoter areas of northern Scotland, we would constantly meet up with people whom Bryan and Betty had met on previous visits, and who now regarded them as friends what a gift be had, and Betty too! But genius has been described as an infinite capacity for taking pains and Bryan's rapport with people did not just happen. Throughout the year for example. Bryan and Betty read the *Oban Times*, and kept in touch with the life of the people of the region. Bryan and Betty rejoiced in the beauty and wildness of the Scottish countryside but they were never just tourists, passing through to admire it. They lived in Scotland, for two months each year.

Bryan, then, was a fine doctor, highly skilled, and with a wonderful ability to relate to all sorts and conditions of men and women. But he was also much more than a doctor. He was, first and foremost, a Christian, and his faith permeated the whole of his life. Faithful to his strong Methodist background (an uncle had been Principal of Cliffe College in Derbyshire). Bryan served for 56 years as a Local Preacher (supported in his work, as always, by Betty, who always accompanied him and indeed shared in the preparation and presentation of the services). Hymns played a large part in Bryan's leadership of worship, and, indeed in his personal faith and family life. He knew hundreds of hymns by heart and he sang them constantly, at home (down the telephone and whilst drying up), on the road whilst. driving his car, and, as I know from personal experience, whilst walking in the countryside. Bryan found in the great hymns vast reservoirs of spritual power, He could never quite decide on the comparative merits of' Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley.

Most of us here will know what an eloquent and persuasive preacher Bryan was. I can still remember parts of sermons that I heard him preach years ago. But the secret of Bryan's success as a preacher was that we knew that his words were not just words. He really lived his Christian faith. His caring love for other people was fundamental to his life.

This was most obviously true of Bryan's family life. Bryan was detemined to share with those he

loved the beauty and the truth that he had found in the Gospel, but also in the natural world that God had created. Charlotte and William remember summer holidays entirely different from the week in Blackpool or Filey that was typical of the time. Members of the Eagles family found themselves transported to the outermost reaches of the Scottish islands, encamped by craggy and windswept shorelines marvelling at the majesty of the natural world around them, birds of prey overhead, stags inland on the moors, otters in the streams, a killer whale in the bay. The whole experience was a challenge to the imagination and the sense of wonder.

As the family grew, and Bryan and Betty acquired grandchildren - Jennifer, Caroline and Lucy, Anna, Megan Matthew and Molly - Bryan was careful to keep in touch. On holiday in Scotland with Bryan and Betty, Pat and I were aware of constant telephone calls, and innunerable post Bryan's cards, (Bryan it must be said, was not so hot on modern technology. He and Betty did recently acquire a mobile phone but the family had to manage without E-mails) At home, Bryan made the garden bonfire a source of delight to the grandchildren and of anxiety to Betty, and to the neighbours - although William assures me that the New Mill bonfires were but a pale reflection of the bonfires that Bryan used to build in Scotland, when there were no neighbours to worry about! Nor did the animals miss out. Betty had suggested that it would be more convenient to feed Fella on dried food, which it was much easier to bring home from the shop. She found that Bryan was continuing to sneak tins of meat in to him, and to the cats - the latter on grounds of natural justice!

But Bryan's pastoral care was not limited to his family, nor even to his patients or fellow members of his Church. It knew no boundaries. In retirement, with Betty. he worked for many years for Meals on Wheels, and he was the Chair of the New Mill, Hepworth and Scholes Senior Citizens Reunion. Throughout his long years of membership of the Rotary Club, he had a particular concern for the disabled members of the community, when he and Betty went shopping, Bryan's role was pastoral. He spoke to the people they met, and more important, he listened to them, He had the gift of making each of them feel special and this was because he did think of each of them as special.
William remembers how the divergent friends of his youth regarded Bryan as the "coolest" of dads; he was interested in them, accepting of their eccentricities and wholly non-judgemental.

It occurs to me with horror that, as I list all Bryan's attributes and activities, I may be making him sound rather dull. I don't think that anyone who knew him would make that mistake, Bryan was highly entertaining company, and could be extremely funny. He was certainly the star turn in the very successful Holmfifth Rotary debating team of the 1980's- a team, that was. I can assure you, never beaten in a fair contest, but only as he result of a miscarriage of justice. He contributed, with Betty, hilarious items to the Old Time Music Halls that Rotary used to stage.

A little earlier, Bryan had written hugely entertaining scripts for dramatic productions at Holme Valley School - "Carry on up the Tiber" and 'Crisis in Camelot," the lyrics initially set to hymn tunes, suitably re-written by Stuart Douglas. Bryan loved parties, and party games. He and Betty ran for many years an annual party, with games that must have needed months of preparation. Bryan loved to entertain his friends to food and conversation, often in considerable numbers, seated around that vast dining table. Especially favoured friends received greetings written in verse on significant birthdays.

One of Bryan's most engaging traits was his whole hearted enjoyment of the simple things of life, his ability to find pleasure and satisfation in the events of what might have been thought matter a grim day. "Weren't we lucky." he might exclaim, at the end of a day of gardening in almost uninterrupted rain. "that the sun came out for 10 minutes just when, we planned to dig up the potatoes? "Bryan loved to allude to the words traditionally spoken in 1588 by Francis Drake when his game of bowls was interrupted by the news that the Armada had been sighted in the English Channel "We've plenty of time to finish this - and beat the Spaniards, too"
There is so much about Bryan's life that I have not mentioned; his love of music the scholarly

expertise that he brought to the study of local history with the Huddersfield Local History Society, his involvement in Methodism's "Fellowship of the Kingdom"....

One of my favourite stories about Bryan concerns the financial advisor who suggested ways in which Bryan could reduce his tax liability, Bryan was outraged. 'But I don't want to reduce my tax liability" he said. "I think that we should all be paying much more tax,". The financial adviser was bewildered, he had never before met anyone quite like Bryan.

That must be a feeling that many of us have - we have never met anyone quite like Bryan. either: a man who combined high levels of scholarly intelligence and professional skill with a simple goodness that enriched the lives of all those who came into contact with him. A man for all seasons. A man who inspired love and affection wherever he went. We rejoice to think of him now, freed from the pain that he had suffered in recent months, welcomed by the Lord he served so well:
Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord !"

IN HIS OWN WRITE

Dr Eagles was a particular friend to the *Journal*, always encouraging and supportive in that most practical of ways — he wrote for it, prolifically. Whenever something was needed, be it article or obituary, the Eagles pen could always be relied upon to deliver. Thoroughly researched and elegantly written, his articles were always the answer to an editor's prayer and will be greatly missed in future.

But, fortunately, there is plenty to look back on and enjoy in this selection which, hopefully captures something of his warm, accessible style and breadth of interest. It begins in 1987 with an article on the smallpox outbreak that affected his own village of New Mill in 1893. This is followed by a very different work, the introduction to an extensive appreciation that Dr Eagles wrote, in 1992. about that doyen of local historians, prominent Councillor and personal friend, Clifford Stephenson. The warmth of that tribute revealing the personality of the writer almost as much as his subject a "much-loved friend" that we have, once again, lost.

Two years later, he produced a personal favourite of mine, an account of Huddersfield's little known novelist Norman Porritt. Like Doctor Eagles he was a medical man, surgeon to the Infirmary and obviously someone whom his biographer would have liked to meet, as they both possessed, as he wrote of Porritt, "great learning and very wide interests .... leavened with a very attractive sense of humour."

SMALLPOX IN THE - HOLME VALLEY 1892-3

By Dr J.B. Eagles

Many years ago a friend lent me a booklet produced in 1938 to commemorate the centenary of New Mill National School, although no longer used as a school, this building still stands opposite the parish church. Twenty pages of this little book comprise extracts from the "log", the daily school record, kept by various headmasters from 1862 to 1938. An, entry dated August 4th, 1893 reads as follows:

A circular sent to the parents, explaining that a hospital was now provided for Small 'Pox patients, and that. if there were no fresh cases, the School would reopen on the 14th. inst." (1)

This was the first I had heard of a smallpox epidemic in New Mill, although I had heard some talk of an old smallpox Hospital on the outskirts of the village. Indeed when I moved in 1960 in the house where I still live at the bottom of Butterley Lane in New Mill, an elderly neighbour told me that the stable block had been built, sometime in the early 1900's, with stone acquired from the demolition of a "hospital" at a place called Grassy Cliff, not far away on the slopes of Mount Scar. Subsequent research revealed that there was indeed an epidemic of smallpox in the New Mill in 1893, preceeded by a small outbreak in Holmfirth the year before, and that very slight traces of the old hospital can still be seen if you know where to look.

The Background

Smallpox has now been eliminated from the world. Although the virus itself may have helped somewhat by declining in virulence, there is little doubt that the main factor in its conquest was the judicious, world-wide use of vaccination. In the last quarter of the 18th century Jenner observed that sufferers from cowpox, a trivial infection caught from cattle, acquired some immunity to smallpox. From this he developed the technique of vaccination, artificially inoculating human beings with cowpox. His work was published in 1798, and immediately recognised as a great advance; Parliament voted him £5000 in 1802, and a further £20,000 five years later. The new preventive measure was rapidly taken up by the well-informed and well -to-do, but the great mass of ordinary folk were slow to avail themselves of the protection offered.

A succession of vaccination acts were passed from 1840 to 1871, making vaccination first available to all, then compulsory in infants and finally imposing heavy penalties for noncompliance, But still throughout the 19th century, and indeed well into the present century. epidemics of smallpox continued to occur. Many people still refused to take advantage of the protection offered moreover as the century advanced, persuasion, propaganda and compulsion from medical men, sanitary reformers and Government was met by a rising tide of opposition from anti-vaccinationists; so much so that in 1898 the government felt obliged to pass an amending act. allowing exemption from vaccination on grounds of conscience.

Much of the opposition to vaccination was ignorant and erroneous. It was suggested that those vaccinated would acquire bestial characteristics from the cattle who were the source of the vaccine. Miss Marjorie Wilkinson whose grandfather, a staunch and bigoted Golcar Baptist, was a doughty warrior in the cause of anti-vaccination, has supplied me with a poem which sets out the possible horrible consequences of vaccination:

"0 Jenner, Thy book nightly phantasises rousing
Full oft makes me quake for my heart's dearest treasure,
For fancy, in dreams, oft presents them all browsing
On common, just like Nebuchadnezzar.
There nibbling at thistle, stand John, Jem and Mary.
On their forehead, O Horrible he, crumpled horns bud.
There Tom with his tail, and William, all hairy,
Reclined in corner, are chewing the cud."

Apart from these bizarre objections the anti - vaccinationists could advance some more cogent arguments; sometimes vaccinated persons did get smallpox, vaccination in its infancy did not confer lifelong immunity. Occasionally there were serious, even fatal reactions, and septic infection could arise from careless techniques. Public vaccination was in the hands of the poor law doctors, often feared by the populace, who were afraid they would be contaminated by other diseases transmitted from dirty paupers.

Probably the most potent sentiment fuelling the fire of anti-vaccinationism was the resentment felt in the country at large because of all the public-health legislation, seen as interference with individual freedom, which had accumulated rapidly in the 19th century. One objector complained "we are an over- legislated for people, and a lady-poet, Mrs Hume Rothery exclaimed: "Under favour of the odious vaccination acts, a poor mans house may be entered by the emissaries of the Medical Star Chamber to ascertain whether his children have been bloodpoisoned according to law."
Indeed by 1893 local medical officers of health had acquired Draconion powers. In his report for that year Dr. Kaye the Huddersfield M.O.H., listed the actions which he could and did take in cases of smallpox:

'Instant removal of all cases.
Disinfection of the premises with Sulphur fumes.
Disinfection of all materials there in and removal of all clothing and bed-linen to the steam disin fector.
Bathing and disinfection of all other inmates at the Hospital.
Constant supervision of the other members of the family; their mixing with others forbidden and as far as possible prevented."
It's not surprising that some people regarded the vaccination acts as the last straw in a burden of meddlesome legislation. Resistance could sometimes go to great lengths. At Keighley in 1875 there was a serious outbreak of small pox with 208 cases and 25 deaths (3). The local Board of Guardians were instructed to organise a programme of vaccination. They refused to do this and subsequently ignored a high court order. As a result they were committed to York Gaol. But they had a lot of support in Keighley where the people expressed their feelings in the following jingle:

"It is for you the noble guardians
In York Gaol lay today;
To rescue men of Keighley
And unite without delay."

On the other side proponents of vaccination continued to urge their views with vigour. In his 1893 report the M.O.H. for Huddersfield produced gruesome photographs of fatal smallpox cases and wrote:
'If any convicible anti-vaccinationist could have witnessed the horrible condition of both patients features swollen beyond recognition and covered from head to foot with loathsome-smelling scabs and totally incapable of doing anything for themselves, I do think he would seriously have reconsidered his position'

It was against this background of entrenched controversy that smallpox came to the Holme Valley in 1892.3, first in Holmfirth then in New Mill. Public reaction was vigorous. even violent. This can only be understood when considered against the preexisting emotional background.

The Outbreak in Holmfirth

Prior to 1892 for almost 20 years there had been no oases of smallpox in the Holme Valley, and for a few years the incidence had been small in the country as a whole. There were no cases at all in Huddersfield in 1888, 1889 and 1890, and only a very few in 1891. But 1892 showed an alarming upsurge throughout the country, and especially in the north. In England and Wales in 1890.

there were only 15 deaths from smallpox, in 1891 but in 1802 there were 426 deaths; 40 smallpox deaths occurred in the West Riding alone In the second quarter of 1892.

Everyone must have been aware that smallpox was inexorably increasing, the authorities were on the lookout. In May the Holmfirth M.O.H. reported that he had been carefully screening the caravan people who had come into the town for Holmfirth Feast, In l893 local government in the Holme Valley was in the hands of seven separate Local Boards, who sometimes joined forces but more often acted independently. These Boards had been set up as recently as 1888 along with the new County Councils. As yet their duties and functions were somewhat ill-defined, not yet consolidated by custom. Moreover they were continually subject to reminders and instructions from the County Council which, with their meagre resources, they were unable or unwilling to put into effect.

The Medical Officer for all the Holme Valley Boards was a man called Berry, who had qualified as an apothecary in 1858, and practised from Huddersfield Road. Holmfirth. He probably had a fairly lowly status in the local medical community; almost certainly he was a poor law doctor. Despite this he undoubtedly conducted his public health duties with energy and success. In June 1892 a man called George Whitely came to Holmfirth with his wife and children from Rastrick. His wife was a daughter of Abel Haigh of Cartworth Fold, Holmfirth, and the Whitely family came to stay there. The houses at Cartworth Fold are still extant. They are less than a mile from the centre of Holmfirth. but the setting is rural and isolated. In 1892 there were more houses thereabouts but the place was still fairly remote. The family had hardly arrived when the baby developed smallpox. All the children were unvaccinated. Doctor Berry acted promptly, he recommended, and the Board approved, that an adjoining house in Cartworth should be rented, so that cases and contacts could be separated; there were 12 persons living in Abel Haigh's house in very cramped conditions. The family were strictly quarantined, food, water and medicines were dumped outside the cottages, and the inmates earned the money to pay for these by disinfecting and white washing the property, The measures were very successful in containing the outbreak. Four other members of the family became infected but only one other person outside the family, this was a man called George Beever, who had been employed to deliver supplies to the beleaguered household. All the patients recovered, there were no deaths. The whole operation cost the Local Board over £60. and this gave rise to some resentment in the local press.

The Holmfirth Hospital Project

The Board and its medical officer had every reason to be pleased with themselves: a potentially dangerous outbreak had been most successfully limited, one might have expected the whole incident to pass from the public mind in an atmosphere of relief and satisfaction. Far from it; almost at once the Board became engaged in violent controversy.

Earlier in 1898, before ever the outbreak at Cartworth Fold had arisen, the County Council had begun to pressurise the Local Board, urging them to make provision for the isolation of cases of infectious disease, especially smallpox. In March and April negotiations had taken place with the other, adjacent local boards, and some measure of agreement had been reached to acquire and operate jointly a suitable property as an isolation hospital.

There were already some similar schemes in existence. Huddersfield had had a hospital at Birkby for a long time, and a new hospital at Mill Hill was at the planning stage. Linthwaite had taken the intiative in making similar provision for the Colne Valley; they had a hospital at Meltham. but were frost reluctant to accept cases from authorities outside the Colne Valley. Indeed when Dr. Matthews sent a case of smallpox to Meltham from Underbank, there was an almighty row as to who should defray the cost.

When the Cartworth outbreak occurred, the Holme Valley Boards were on the point of a decision. The initiative came from Holmfirth. although even there opinion was divided. Of the other authorities, Fulstone was enthusiastic, Hepworth and Austonley were willing to join and Netherthong pleaded poverty, Holme replied

that they had their own arrangements, and were quite satisfied with them.

On August 8th Mr. Marshall presented the Holmfirth Board with a definite scheme. He proposed that, acting in concert with the other authorities, they should buy a farmhouse and 13 1/2 acres of land at Upper Snape on the Meltham, border, for the purpose of a joint infectious hospital. The purchase price was £650. This proposal was carried by 6 votes to 3. Upper Snape is on the tops above Holmfirth in the direction of Greenfield, close to where the sheepdog trials are held nowadays. It is a wild and windy spot, and in the ensuing controversy a remark of Dr. Trotter, the contemporary member of a famous local medical family was much quoted:

"If they take ill people up that wild, cold place, they will necd all 13 1/2 acres as a graveyard." The vote of August 8th sparked off vigorous local controversy which continued throughout August, until in early September the decision was reversed. Mr. Marshall, the pioneer of the scheme was a local magnate who lived at Wellhouse, Thongsbridge and his opponents did not fail to draw attention to this. Opposition on the Board was led by Mr Brook of Woodale when he lost the vote on August 8th he turned to the community at large, and began to whip up opposition. He wrote to the local paper: 'Is it at all necessary for rural sanitory authorities, sparsely populated with plenty of room to breathe and turn themselves in, to carry into effect all the measures which may be necessary in towns and boroughs, which are thickly populated." Mr. Brook also mobilised the Wooldale Ratepayers Association who wrote to the Board: "This association enters a vigorous protest against the hospital policy of the Holmfirth Local Board, believing it to be altogether unnecessary and contrary to the wishes of the large majority of the ratepayers." it does seem that trade was bad in Holmfirth at the time; there are frequent references to unemployment and empty mills. New manufacturers could only be attracted to the Holme Valley if rates were kept down. Moreover the Local Board already had expensive commitments such as a projected technical school, and the County Council were always pressing on them costly sewerage and drainage schemes. Outside the Local Board the most militant of the opponents of the hospital plan was Mr. John Holmes of Kirkroyds. He was a rope manufacturer and quite a young man at the time. He was later to be nicknamed monkey John", and to become famous as an irascible eccentric. It is said that in the general strike of 1920 he drove his own lorry with a loaded revolver on the dashboard.

On the 3rd of September there was a public meeting in Holmfirth, chaired by Mr. Ouarmby. Deputy Constable of the Graveship of Holme. Prior to the gathering, Wooldale Band paraded the streets. whipping up supporters. There was an overwhelming vote against the hospital project, but it appeared that the Local Board were not disposed to take any notice of this. indeed Mr. Marshall was heard to remark, 'He would not be guided by asses whipped together by a brass band.'

The opposition moved quickly. The Board ~ due to meet again on September 5th, at which meeting Mr. Brook had given notice he would move to rescind the previous decision. On the evening of the 5th a large crowd assembled at the top of Victoria Street in response to an advertisement which had appesred in the Holmfirth Express: "RATEPAYERS In spite of your unanimous protest the District Hospital Committee have decided to proceed with the Harden Hall Site. Assemble in thousands to utter an emphatic protest on Monday evening at the top of Victoria St.. and send a deputation to the Holrnfirth Local Board which will then be sitting' Mr. John Holmes harangued the crowd and was duly elected a member of the deputation. Once inside the Board meeting he made a personal attack on Mr. Marshall, referring to him as a comer in and adding: "A gentleman of the Board had suggested they needed an Asylum. Well, doubtless they did and he could suggest a candidate for admission." Mr. Marshall was clearly nettled and, in the course of a long speech gave as good as he got: "It had been urged in the course of the opposition that he 'Mr. Marshall was an importation into the district. Under the whole of the circumstances he was quite prepared to be counted as such. If the gentleman who sat in the corner (Mr. Holmes) was a specimen of the nativeborn talent, he desired to be set down as an importation." However this time Mr. Marshall did not have his way. In the face of the

vociferous public outcry, Mr. Brook's motion to rescind the previous minute and proceed no further with the hospital was carried by 6 votes to 5. Despite their decision the unhappy Board members were roughly handled when they emerged from the meeting. There was a scuffle in which Mr. Marshall fell to the ground, and the legislators were pursued to the nearby White Hart by a hostile, jeering crowd.

So ended the Holmfirth hospital project. In October cane a further letter from the County Council asking what provision the Holmfirth Board proposed to make for Smallpox cases. The clerk was instructed to tell the whole sorry tale, recount the success of the Cartworth outbreak, and say that similar steps would be taken in future.

The Outbreak in New Mill

Meanwhile in the country as a whole smallpox continued to advance. In 1893 the Lancet reported more cases and the involvement of fresh areas, the situation was worst in the north of England. In the Holme Valley sporadic cases continued to occur. In January there was a case at the Deanhouse workhouse, and another at Fulstone Hall, New Mill. The following month the infant daughter of the Hepworth Schoolmaster went down with the disease and these were two further cases at Fulstone Hall. There was also one at Honley.

The spring was unusually dry; no rain fell at all for 29 consecutive days in March and April. These were ominous conditions for the spread of an infection. At the end of May the disease struck right at the heart of New Mill. Mrs. Barraclough was the first case. She lived just behind the National School, in a group of houses still known as Barraclough Row. All around was a warren of thickly populated little yards, some of which still survive. This was a much more favourable habitat for smallpox than the relatively secluded Cartworth Fold.By the beginning of July there were fresh cases, and Mrs. Barraclough had died. New Mill was the concern of the Fulstone Local Board and they were caught at a disadvantage; they had no Sanitary Inspector. But they proceeded to appoint one at once, a Mr. Wadsworth, and Doctor Berry was very active. Two nurses were imported from Bradford to look after the sick. One of them. Isobel Waterhouse, subsequently married Mr. Wadsworth and settled in the Holme Valley. The school was closed, contacts were vaccinated, and the affected area was cordoned off. One of the cases was Mrs. Rowley; her son. Willie, lived until 1983, and was a boy of three and a half in 1893. He recalled living behind the cordon, and how passers-by used to throw sweets to him. But the disease continued to spread. Miss Marjorie Booth, whose father John was then an Infant and caught the disease, recalls a family tradition that he was infected by a pet cat which had lain on one of the sick-beds.

By mid-july there were twelve cases and the village was in the grip of panic. Some people fled from the place. The late Mrs. M. E. Brock told me that in 1893 she was living at the Albert Hotel Thongsbridge; relatives from New Mill took refuge there for the duration of the outbreak. The local baker sought to escape to Holmfirth, but was already incubating the disease, much to the wry amusement of his neighbours. In this climate of fear a deputation, representing 95 householders, presented a petition to the Fullstone Local Board "we the undersigned ratepayers beg to offer our advice regarding the cases of smallpox at New Mill; after due consideration we have come to the conclusion that a place should be provided for any fresh outbreak that may occur. We think it better to have the patients taken away and have the houses thoroughly disinfected, rather than having the whole family in a guarantine as they are at present. Hoping you will give this your consideration."

Mr. CS. Tinker of Meal Hill. local coal owner and Chairman of the Board responded: 'Something should be done, and something would have been done, but for the disorderly meetings at Holmfirth.

Something was done. During the next 10 days the Board acquired the lease of a property called Grassy Cliff, on the slope of Mount Scar, about three-quarters of a mile south east of the village. In a very short time they equipped the place, improved the access to it and installed Miss Waterhouse as matron. On the 12th of August

four patients were admitted, Mrs. Rowley and Mr. Barracough both already convalescent, and two more recent cases, John Booth and Peter Kaye. Only one further case arose, an infant, and this too was admitted to the new hospital. And there the epidemic came to an end. In all there were 20 cases and two deaths, Mrs. Barraclough and Mrs. Melior. The hospital inmates must have had a pleasant time. It was still late summer and they had a beautiful place in which to convalesce, green and sunny, perched high above New Mill with a splendid view. Willie Rowley recalled being taken to see his mother at Grassy Cliff; he stood on Scaley Gate and waved to he as she was stationed at the other end of the hospital drive. Later on there was a happy occasion when Miss Waterhouse left Grassy Cliff as a bride, to be married to her sanitary inspector.

The Subsequent History of the Hospital.

The hospital at Grassy Cliff was conceived, planned and brought into being in less than a month. This time there was no public outcry; indeed the scheme seems to have been generally approved. But it did not meet with the approval of the redoubtable John Holmes. He was nettled by the remarks made by the Fulstone Board chairman about "disorderly meetings at Holmfirth." He wrote to the local paper attacking Mr. Tinker most intemperately: I am told they they never use the franchise at Fulstone, and that Mr. Tinker and his servants gain seats on the Board simply by nominating one another Mr. Tinker sneers at a meeting attended by 7 or 800 rate-payers and tells them they are 150 years behind the times. If so, what about Mr. Tinker and his FOOLSTONE Local Board, which has had no election for four years and has forgotten how to use the franchise. The Board's deliberations are mere farmily matters. If we, with our elections are 150 years behind, we must relegate Mr. Tinker to Cedric the Saxon's time.'

There was much more in the ssme vein, and he then went on to criticise the Board's handling of the recent epidemic. He argued that too little had been done and too late, and that this'...., was the immediate cause of the further spread of the smallpox, and what was worse, a deadly paralysing panic, fed and fired by the aimless bungling of the board." But this time John Holmes did not speak for the people. Further correspondents supported the Board and attacked Mr. Holmes. One such, signing himself 'ANTI-CANT', urged Mr. Tinker to ignore the attack (which he did) and concluded "Let us hope that the experience of the last few months will induce our local authorities in the future to act as reasonable and responsible men, and not as if intimidated by a few windy, wordy wobbiers such as Mr. John Holmes." Controversy in the press was certainly pursued with vigour in Victorian times. In the event Mr. Holmes and his fellow agitators were probably right. After the epidemic of 1893, the hospital at Crassy Cliff never received any further drive patients and became an increasing embarrassment to the local authority, it was necessary to maintain the buildings and equipment and employ a caretaker.

In 1894 the Fulstone Local Board came to an end, and was succeeded by New Mill Urban District Council. In 1897 the Council found considerable evidence of of dilapitation and expensive repairs were necessary. In June of the following year they received a letter from the solicitors of the owner (the Council were tenants with a repairing lease) He wanted the Council to buy Crassy Cliff and if they were not willing to do so, he gave notice that he would sell it by auction. The council could not afford to buy, and were already negotiating with neighbouring authorities to join in another hospital project.

The auction of Grassy Cliff duly took place at New Mill on July 6th 1898, and there was a surprise outcome. Mr. William Hirst of Oak Leas, New Mill, who was a sort of unofficial Squire to the vIllage, bought the place for £140 , and then, in the words of the Clerk to the Council "He declared his intention of handing over the property as a gift to the Council, conditionally on its being kept as a Smallpox hospital, and that he was not put to any cost in respect of the conveyance. etc. ' It was understood that if the place ceased to be a hospital the ownership would revert to Mr. Hirst. The lawyers took more than a year to enshrine this rather complex arrangement in legal form.

By that time New Mill Council were anxious to be rid of the place; even its maintenance was proving too much for their resources. In October 1899 it was proposed that the hospital be abandoned and there was a tied vote, 6 for and 6 against: the Chairman refused to use his casting vote. By now the Council were already taking part in the Colne and Holme Joint Hospital Committee, and had access to Moor Top Hospital, Meltham. In August 1901 the caretaker was discharged, and the equipment transferred to Meltham. Finally, early in 1902, the place was abandoned, and ownership reverted to Mr. Hirst. Very shortly after that he had the buildings demolished.

The site of the hospital can still be identified, although very few stones remain. It stood just below Hirst Lane, New Mill, not far from Upper Holmhouse Farm. slightly to the south of a path joining Upper and Lower Holmhouse The drive which led to the vanished building can still be identified, though this will not be possible for much longer; this drive commenced on Scaleygate, about 100 yards below its junction with First Lane. The only prominent survival of the hospital is a grassy promontory at the end of the drive, retained by substantial walls. I have little doubt that this was the site of the cab-stand' referred to several time in both Local Board and Council minutes. Presumably this was where the horse-drawn vehicle which served the hospital was turned and parked. This promontory makes a splendid viewpoint; standing there one looks down on the village which, in 1893. was stricken with disease and in the grip of panic.

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CLIFFORD STEPHENSON AN APPRECIATION

By Dr Eagles

At the beginning of February, Clifford Stephenson died at the age of 89. He was the most senior and most distinguished member of our Society and an important local historian in is his own right. Just two days before he died I had the pleasure of sitting with him for a couple off hours. By then he knew that his time was limited, but this hardly impinged on our conversation; our talk was of local history I was asking him about notable Huddersfield medical men at the turn of the century. He told me that, as a very young boy, he remembered seeing Lockwood Road covered in straw, to muffle the sounds of wheels as they passed Albert House Lockwood where Dr. McGregor lay dying. Clifford went on "I've always been an anecdotal historian, I like telling a good tale".

And he did indeed tell a very good tale, both verbally and in print. One recalls his account of the purchase of the Ramsden estate, 'The town that bought itself," and his short history off Ben Shaws, produced for the centenary of the firm with which he and his father had been associated for so long. Most recently there appeared in our own *Journal* extracts from Clifford's memoirs. Some of us have had the opportunity reading these in their entirety, and thoroughly enjoying their wide range extending from infancy in pioneering Canada. thtough the early days of

retailing and the early days of motoring to 19 years of service on Huddersfield Borough Council. This came to an end in 1974, with the advent of Kirklees. In those last days of Huddersfield Corporation Clifford was one of the triumvirate of party leaders who tried to arrange the affairs of the Borough with a maximum of goodwill and a minimum of sectarian rancour.

There are a number of Stephenson memorials in Huddersfield, the fruitition of various projects with which he was closely associated. the restoration of the tower on Castle Hill, the preservation of the station and the planning of the Market Hall and Town centre. But, especially in the later years of his council work, much of what he did was unseen and unappreciated and he was the chairman of a number of these committees. At the peak of national activity Clifford was a member of twenty separate committees, so that the name of Stephenson was widely know, throughout the country, Just before the dissolution of Huddersfield Borough his splendid service was aknowledged when he was made a Freeman of Huddersfield, the very last in a long line of eminent men. Another honour which came to him more recently was when he was made a Fellow of the Polytechnic of which he bad been a Governor for a number of years. It is pleasant to remember that, in the last year of his life, he was able to take part in the Anniversary Celebrations at the Polytechnic. He gave one of a series of lectures arranged to celebrate the Polytechnic's 150 years; it was delivered with undiminished flair and humour and was greatly enjoyed by his hearers.

One of the causes to which Clifford devoted a great deal ot time and energy was the restoration of the Parish Church. It was a source of great amusement to him that the Anglicans had had to recruit a life-long Methodist to help with their fund-raising. For he was a Methodist through and through, firm supporter of Methodism in general, and Park Road Methodist Church in particular. He was a good Methodist, but not a narrow sectarian one. He hated cant, bigotry and humbug. He was a liberal Christian with a broad faith and a large heart.

I had the honour of speaking at his funeral, and do this I stood behind a splendid lectern which Clifford had made with his own hands. A unique feature of this was a special hook. which the craftsman put there for a lady preacher to hang her handbag: surely the inimitable Stephenson touch. In a neighbouring room were a series of photographs of Park Road Church, before its alteration, beautifully framed and displayed by Clifford Stephenson. It listed among his hobbies. 'using tools of any kind', and he was temarkably skilful with his hands, and very fund of devising gadgets. His home abounds with echos of his many-sided personalty: his famous collection of maps, and a rich harvest of local history material, books, pamphlets and photographs. All of this was beautifully catalogued and attanged, the most valuable books in his own special binding. As I write I look round at the chaos which overwhelms all my bits and pieces, and reflect on the meticulous order in which Clifford kept all his things. A model to us all.

But I should be failing in my duty if I recorded merely the public achievements of Clifford Stephenson, and failed to record his warm, sympathetic, highly individual personality. Above all he was full of fun. Many of us recall his interventions during discussion at our meetings: on the one hand they might bring an over confident, pompous speaker down to size, or in the kindest possible way, he would encourage a different lecturer to develop his ideas further. One of the really great things about Clifford was the way in which he preserved, into advanced old age, childlike qualities of wonder and enthusiasm. Most of us, as we get older, get more sophisticated, more cynical, sceptical of new things, bored.
As Wordsworth says:
Shades of the prison house begin to close
Upon the growing boy
This never happened to Clifford; he preserved his sense of wonder to the last. Show him a new map, or a new bit of local history, or try him with a new idea, and this eyes lit up with enthusiasm. At the age of 89 he preserved endearing qualities which must have characterised the lad who roamed round Crosland Moor in the days before the First World War.

Many of us have lost a much-loved friend. We extend our sympathy to Elizabeth; we hope to see her regularly at our future meetings, both in her own right and also to refresh our memories of a most distinguished member of our Society, and a fine citizen of Huddersfield; Clifford Stephenson.

NORMAN PORRITT

HUDDERSFIELD'S SURGEON - NOVELIST

Thiry odd years ago I was the secretary of Huddersfield Medical Society, and had in my possession the old minutes of the Society, going back to 1880. More recently, through the kindness of the present secretary Dr. Harting, I have been able to have another look at these minutes. The years that I find most fascinating are the quarter of a century, 1880 - 1905. The Medical Society had been re-founded in 1880, and the members were full of enthusian. But more important than that, it was a time of adventure and discovery in the country as a whole, especially in the field of surgery. This was not, as one night expect, primarily due to the use of anaesthetics; both ether and chloroform had become available before. 1850. What made all the difference in those late Victorian and Edwardian years to the success of operations, and the survival of patients who had been operated on, was the recognition of infections as the chief hazard in the practice of surgery.

In a paper presented to the Society in 1896 Jon Iving, one of the Huddersfield surgeons, recalled surgical practice at the Infirmary 23 years earlier when he first started:

> "The surgeons wore woollen gowns, which were very seldom washed, and the house surgeon put on his coat for operations, and, to put it mildly, scrupulous care as not taken with the hands. Instruments were handed to the operator straight from he cupboard, and lotion for the hands was never thought of."

Thereafter the teaching of Joseph Lister, with its emphasis on cleanliness and the use of antiseptics, was introduced to Huddersfield Infirmary. There was an immediate rise in the number of operations performed, and a major reduction in the risk involved: in 1874 there were 55 operations with 42 deaths, but in 1895 there were 400 operations with 47 deaths.

This spirit of new development, new conquest, comes through in minutes of the Medical Society. Surgical procedures new to Huddersfield are described at almost every meeting. And new discoveries in basic science are regularly reported from all over the world; the discovery of Xrays and the use of antitoxin in diphtheria were both discussed at the Society well before the turn of the century.

Many of the members of Huddersfield Medical Society performed operations occasionally. And even those who were Honorary Surgeons to the Infirmary did not spend all their time in the operating theatre or the surgical wards they were general practitioners as well, and their work in the community occupied most of their time. Nor was there any significant degree of specialisation. The same man would, at different times, perform an abdominal operation, amputate a limb or conduct a complicated midwifery case.

It is against this background that I want to discuss the career of a man who was a medical practitioner in Huddersfield from 1881 until 1911, and was a surgeon at the Infirmary for nearly all off that time. He was called Norman Porritt, and he was a native of Huddersfield, being born into a well known family of merchants. His family home was at Clare Hill, which was, at that time, a very good address. Norman Porritt was horn in 1858. His first cousin, ten years older than he, was George Taylor Porritt of Crosland Hall, the famous

Huddersfield naturalist. Norman Porritt was educated at Huddersfield Collegiate School, and then went to Leeds Medical School. He graduated M.R.C.S. in 1879, and L.R.C.P. the following year. He clearly a brilliant srudent. 'When, 4 years later, he applied for the post of Honorary Sutgeon at Huddersfield, he presented a package of glowing testimonials.

As was customary at the time, these were published and can still befound in the Local History Library at Huddersfield: here is a typical example, from Mr. Nunneley. the eye surgeon:

> "...at the Leeds School of Medicine, where Mr. Porritt at received his medical education, he was probably the most distinguished student of his time- and took nearly all the prizes, both in scientific and also in practical subjects sucit a medicine and surgery which were open to him.

There are more than a dozen testiminonials in the same vein. But perhaps the most interesting is one from Dr Clifford Allbutt, a leading physician at Leeds General Infirmary. It comes in the form of a letter to Porritt himself:

> "...The prizes you obtained were valuable, and I can testify that they were obtained by solid acquirements, and by no cram and good fortune. For instance to my surprise and pleasure I found you in possession of full notes of many my clinical and other lectures, which you had taken down by shorthand, and many of which you kindly copied out for my own use and for publication."

Throughout his working life Porritt was a great enthusiast for shorthand. Later on he taught the subject at a class at the Mechanics Institute.

Immediately after qualifying Porritt worked as a house surgeon in Leeds, and then had a similar post at Huddersfield. In 1881 he became a member of the Medical Society and remained a member until he left the town in 1911. Much later he became President to the Medical Society, and also Chairman of the local division of the British Medical Association. In 1883, shortly before he became an Honorary Surgeon to the Infirmary, he obtained a gold medal from the Medical Society of London for a Thesis on the surgical management of fluid on the chest.

Right from 1881 when he first joined the Medical Society, Porritt was a regular contributor to the meetings, presenting cases, giving longer talks and taking part in discussion. As said earlier no one was a "specialist" in those days, and Porritt's contributions covered a very wide spectrum.

Here is a list, by no means complete, of the subjects on which he addressed his fellow members:

wrist-drop, leg ulcers, convulsions complicating childbirth atropine poisoning, cysts of the ovaries, peritonitis, further complications ofmidwifery, recurrent dislocation of the knee cysts of the kidney, toxic reactions of days given to combat never, tubal pregnancy, gastric ulcer and scurvy.

There are three occasions on which Porritt addressed the Society which are perhaps of more interest to the layman. In 1883 be proposed that they should set up a register of nurses. At this time most nurses did nor have official qualifications, and doctors were anxious to have a list of those with good experience, on whom they could rely. This proposal was enthusiastically adopted by his colleagues, and a committee was set up, with Porritt as a member, to put it into effect.

Thee years later the Society minutes record. 'Mr. Porritt showed a new ether inhaler of his own invention. Finally in 1890 he presented to his colleagues a Temperature and Pulse Chart, which he devised, which could be obtained from Cuthberts. price three halfpence each, or 12 for a shilling.

Meanwhile he had begun to write fiction, for pleasure and profit. There is a short article in the Examiner of February 3rd 1925. which gives an account of Porritts early literary efforts:

> Dr Porritt's first shot as a freelance hit the mark for the editor of 'Cassells Saturday Journal' adopted an article on The Humours of a Doctors life, and other contributions. The author then went for his game, and was fortunate enough to find hospitality for his writings in the 'Globe. But the calls on the time of a busy doctor left him little leisure for lirerary work, and he had literarally to steal the time devoted to writing. This had to be done at odd moments, so that the currents of his thoughts were often unterrupted nevertheless he managed to

find a good number of articles, and he had little difficulty in getting them accepted. A football serial was syndicated in the north of England in 1892, and this was followed by a series of sketches and short stories dealing with hospital life. 1907 the 'Car Illustrated published a series on humorous lines dealing with motorcars. His work also appeared in the 'Strand Magazine 'Lloyd's Magazine', the 'National Review' and many London and provincial papers'.

"CORNERED"

Meanwhile Dr. Porritt embarked on a major work of fiction. In 1891 there appeared a novel, written by him and entitled 'Cornered. 'This is a rather surprising article to be undertaken by a provincial medical man, since a good deal of the action takes place in London. and is concerned with banking and the Stock Exchange. The villains of the piece are a wicked stockbroker and a corrupt bank manager. Embroiled in their machinations are two cousins, the hero, Robert Mettleby, and his scaregrace relative, Algernon Bertram. They share a spinster aunt, Miss Mettleby, from whom they have great expectations.

Miss Mettleby is, for me, by far the most lively and interesting character in the book. She is a devotee offering medicine and pseudo-science. When staying in a hotel or with relatives, she insists that her bed is so orientated that its electromagnetic field harmonises with that of the bedroom. She kept a diary in which she recorded various experiences of scientific interest. Here is one example.

> 4 Feb. 1866 2.26pm Effect of wet metal: On going to the yard on a damp day, took hold of the pump handle. All at once a tremor rushed through the frame , and the moistened metal set free in the system darting currents electricity

When Miss Mettleby comes to London, her main purpose is to consult Prof. Wittowski the great Polish phrenologist, psychometric expert and mesmeric exponent." He was to be found in a small shop with a room behind, near the Holborn end of Oxford Street. Among other things the Professor supplied pots ofthe 'Purified Balm of Mesopotamia', at five guineas a time. Miss Mettleby describes what the Professor has done for her "It is my overexcited brain which has brought me to London with all its drawbacks, it is three years since I consulted Prof. Witttowski. He told me which organs I ought to develop and which I ought to keep in check. My organs are so variegated, and I have to keep constantly on the alert."

When Robert comes engaged to Ethel who is a nurse, Miss Mettleby insists that they go and see Prof. Wirtowski, to check that they are phrenologically suited to one another. He reports unfavourably. Robert is very angry and is disinherited by Miss Mertleby. As a result of various nefarious activities by his bank manager, he also loses his job as a bank clerk.

Miss Mettleby appeals to me as a great comic character. The denouement of the novel takes place in her home at Greenfield. But I will not reveal any more. It is a good read. I can recommend it. There are several copies in the local history library.

Before leaving the subject of Porritt's first novel, I would like to draw attention to a small sub plot which occurs in one of the early chapters. Algemon Bertram has been sent overseas by the wicked stockbroker, leaving is wife in London with a small baby, in very poor circumstances. The baby becomes ill. Mrs. Bertram cannot afford a doctor so she sends of Nancy Bell, a Mrs. Gamp' sort of character:

> "well 'm, resumes Mrs Bell authoritatively, Yer child has brownkits and hinflaymation, and yer must put him in a steam blanket, and poultice his chest with oatmeal and slippery hellum. And if yer wants 'im to get better, yer must give 'im two drops of gin, half a teaspoonful of syrup of vierlets, and 5 rops of Indian brandy every three hours."

On this regime the baby grows worse and worse. Dr. Scott is sent for, and he makes an immediate diagnosis.

> "Do you know that Indian brandy is just another name for laudanum, which is deadly poison, and your child is suffering from the effects of narcotic poisoning ?"

The misuse of opium-containing medicines is thought to have been responsible for a great

many infant deaths in Victorian times. There was a Poisons Act in 1868, hut this did not control patent medicines, and such medicines, many of which contained opium, continued to be freely available till well into the present century.

Under Dr. Scott's care, Annie Bertram's baby begins to improve. But the stockbroker, who is making a pass at Annie arranged for a famous consultant to be called in Dr. Pathologue is in the house a very short time, and this is the authors comment:

> 'In the interest of truth, we must say that the same evening there was a wonderful improvements in the little sufferer. Whether it was that the disease had run its cause; or that Dr. Scott's remedies had at length controlled it; or whether the directions of Dr. Scott's Pathologue ....who spent quite seven minutes in the house..... had had the happy effect of ameliorating the symptoms, will never be known."

This rather sarcastic reference to the great Dr. Pathologue suggests that Porritt did not always regard his professional colleagues with unqualified respect. This is rather illustrated by two other medical portraits: Miss Mettlebys practitioner is presented as a pompous ass and in his second novel he shows us money-grabbing doctor quite prepared to falsify an Insurance report. In a later, more serious work, Porritt says:

> "At forty a man is either a physician or a fool, though of course he may be both!"

Religion and Health

That last quotation was from book which Porritt produced in 1905 called Religion and Health.' When Dr. Porritt left Huddersfield in 1911 his colleagues, at the annual dinner of that year paid tribute to him as a writer. But they were referrng to 'Religion and Health' his novel was never mentioned. This book produced in 1905 is a work of philosophy and deep thought. His main contention is that time health has always been, and must always be assoctiated with religion. He points to the Greeks where early medicine was based on the temple, and the middle ages when the care of the sick was associated with monasteries and hospitals fine by religious orders. Most of all he purports to show that the Jews are less prone to many diseases than are gentiles:

> 'The Jew can show a health, a vigour and longevity superior to those of the races among whom he has been allowed on sudderence to exist."

He thinks that diet especially care in the selection of meat may be a factor but that it is to his religion generally that a Jew owes his freedom from disease.

Finally Porritt considers the effects of the absence of religion in a society. In particular he attacks the evils of alcohol rampant in the society of late Victorian Britain . . . between 1876 and l960 27,413 men and 15.802 women were certified as dying due to the direct effects of drink, and the figures for ciahosis of the liver were even worse, 86,037 men and .37,361 women. He then discussed the evil effects on families. and the children of drinking parents.

'Religion and Health' is a typically Victorian production, very much of its time; most of its auguments would not stand up its analysis. Nevertheless one cannot but admire the extent of Porritt's knowledge, and the vigour of much of his writing; and I expect many environmentalists would be prepared to endorse the sentiments of this passage:

"....all the efforts of sanitarians, doctors and social reformers to improve the standard of health consist in bringing God's gift's unadulterated and unimpaired to the service of man, as they werre before the glut of man's intentions had run riot among them.

Farewell to Huddersfield

Late in 1911 or early in 1912 Dr. Porritt left Huddersfield for good. He was becoming increasingly deaf, and presumably he could no longer manage his general practice and the hurly burly of an Infirmary outpatients clinic; in 'Religion and Health' he writes about seeing an average of I00 patients in an afternoon at the Infirmary. In the autumn of 1911 he was present at the Medical Society's Annual Dinner, and everyone wished him well. The menu for that Dinner is still in existence, and it commemorates both that fateful years and Porritt's departure, 1911 was the years of the National Insurance

Act. The menu has a cartoon which shows the dragon of National Insurance being ridden through the sky by Lloyd George. Below, the ship of Medicine (a boat named Asklepios) is on the rocks; at the bottom is the caption timemus Cambrensem ci dona ferentem,' . . . we fear the Welshman and the gifts he brings. The cartoon also shows an aeroplane in the sky which is labelled Pinner'. This is meant to depict Norman Porritt, leaving Huddersfield and retiring to Pinner in the South of England.

In fact Porritt did not go to Pinner; or if he did, he did not stay there very long. He was soon established in Wales at Bettsy-Coed, where he worked for some years as an ophthalmologist before retiring completely to Llandudno. He soon became very much occupied with writing again, contributing to all sorts of magazines and periodicals, medical and non-medical. He produced two short medical works during his retirement, "The Abdomen in Labour", and "Eclampsia in England and Wales". The first was intended mainly for students. The second promulgated a theory he had held for many years. Eclampsia is a term for the convulsions which may occur in late pregnancy, associated with a high blood pressure. Porritt attempted to prove that the distribution of his dangerous conditiion was related to the levels of lead in drinking water.

The Factory King

In 1925 Dr. Porrirt produced his second novel, which he called 'The Factory King.' I must confess I did not find this as good as his previous one, but those born and bred in Huddersfield may think differently, for the setting of the novel is a very thinly disguised Huddersfield, and many of the landscapes described may well be familiar to the initiated. The Factory King is course Richard Oastler. He appears in the novel, though not as a principal character, but his opinions and the cause for which he strove are central to the book. Porritt tells the reader in his foreword:

> "The writer has not drawn on his imagination for his facts. His descriptions are taken from contemporary records and writings of the Factory Movements."

To some extent the is true. One incident in the book is a mill-fire in which factory children perish, shut in the mill by a wicked overseer. This is obviously directly based on the tragedy which is commorated by the monument in Kirkheaton churchyard. There is also a description of a meeting in the centre of Huddersfield addressed by Oastler, which owes much to contemporary sources. But these factual elements are woven into a romance centred around Philip Bumiston, the son of a mill-owner and himself a pattern weaver. Much of the novel is concerned with the ups-and-downs of his love affair with Ruth, the daughter of a wealthy Huddersfield citizen who is very anxious for her to do better for herself than to marry Philip. The pace of the novel increases when the wicked overseer, Wivelstone, is murdered; Phillip's gun is found near the body and he himself's been seen with something over his shoulder. This is in that the broken 'reed' of Philip's loom, but at a distance it looked like a gun. In the end of course all is well. There is a deathbed confession by the real murderer. Ruth's father is forced to agree to her engagement to Philip. Philip himself, his family mill rebuilt after the fire, goes into partnership with some of Oastler's disciplines, in the running of a mill which will stick to a 10 hour day.

There are many members of the Huddersfield Medical Society in the late Victorian era whom I would like to have known. There was old Samuel Knaggs the doyen of the Society, who was always supporting practitioners in the town whom other members regarded as ethically undesirable. There was Dr. MacGrcgor of Albert House Lockwood a powerful figure in any controversy; Clifford Stephenson used to recall going to school when he was a boy, and Dr. MacGregor was on his death bed; Lockwood Road was covered with straw to muffle the sound of waggon wheels.

But most of all I would like to have had a conversation with Norman Porritt, a man of great learning and very wide interests who was not at all pompous, and whose writing, and I imagine his speech, was leavened with a very attractive sense of humour.

Norman Porritt died at Llandudno at the age of 82, in 1940 when Britain was on the threshold

of a new world, so very different from the late Victorian, and Edwardian era in which the novelist surgeon enjoyed his heyday.